

Lesson Two

The Big Picture

Predestination, pp. 17-23

Goal

To see how the apostle Paul carefully sets forth the teaching of predestination (election) after having powerfully presented the doctrine of justification by faith.

Introduction

- Do you see any evidence in your life that God planned for you to be a follower of Jesus Christ?

In today's lesson we will look at the big picture of the blessings God has given us in his Son Jesus. And we will learn from Scripture that long before we were born—even before creation—God chose us to believe and receive these great blessings.

Chosen to be justified

Romans 1:17 In the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

- From what you know about the book of Romans, how does this verse serve as a fitting theme for the book?

Romans 3:23,24 All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

- List some very important truths brought out in these two verses.

Romans 4:1-3 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to

boast about—but not before God. What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

- Why does Paul use Abraham as an example in teaching the doctrine of justification?

Chosen to be holy people

Romans 6:1,2 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

- After discussing how a person is saved, the apostle Paul answers a natural question: How shall I now live? Also, Paul guards against a natural sinful tendency to think that since we are saved, we can continue in sin. How does Paul deal with these two subjects?
- Mention ways that believers show their gratitude for being saved.

Chosen to be heirs of God

Romans 8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- After speaking about living new lives, Paul reinforces the truth that we stand blameless before God. Why does he do this?

Romans 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

- Why do believers in Christ have no reason to worry?
- Of what does the word *heir* remind us—we who had lost our place in God’s family? What can we look forward to as an heir of God?

Take comfort—these blessings are yours because God predestined you

***Romans 8:28** And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

- This is one of the most frequently quoted passages used in hospital settings. Why is this verse so comforting?

***Romans 8:29** For those God **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be **conformed** to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.*

- Paul continues the thought he began in verse 28. Focus on each of the words in bold print.
- Why does Paul draw attention to this mystery, namely that we have been predestined to be his followers?

***Romans 8:30** And those he predestined, he also **called**; those he called, he also **justified**; those he justified, he also **glorified**.*

- Focus on the words highlighted in the passage above.
- Why does Paul tie these words together: predestined, called, justified, and glorified?
- Can a person know if he or she is one of the elect? Is this something about which one can be absolutely certain?

***Romans 8:31,32** If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?*

Dr. Staupitz, Luther's early mentor, once gave Luther good advice when he was troubled by the doctrine of election. Staupitz told him, "Brother Martin, first find yourself in the wounds of Christ, and then you can be sure of your election." After Paul has comforted us with the teaching of predestination, he returns us immediately to Christ. Why do you think he does this?

Summary

We are Christians not of our own doing but because God wanted us to be Christians. He foreknew from eternity that we would be his dear children. He deliberately decided we would be his own through faith in his Son. He called us, justified us, and glorified us. Can anything that happens to us in this world convince us that God does not love us? Can anything force us off the path to heaven? No!

During the week

1. Review this lesson by reading *Predestination*, pages 17-23. Or, look ahead to the next lesson by reading pages 25-33.
2. Read the book of Ephesians. Many of the passages for our next lesson will be taken from there.